

BHAGAT SINGH

THE CHEERFUL YOUNG MARTYR

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The route to your roots

BHAGAT SINGH

Bhagat Singh sang gustily as he walked to the gallows. Backed by a courageous family, this twenty-three-year-old firebrand was wedded to death. A free India was his heaven, and the martyrs of the freedom struggle were his gods. Using disguise and guile, persuasion and force, his life was a roller-coaster ride through an unjust system. But eventually, he awakened India and the world to the idea of liberty, and brought the mighty British Raj to its knees.

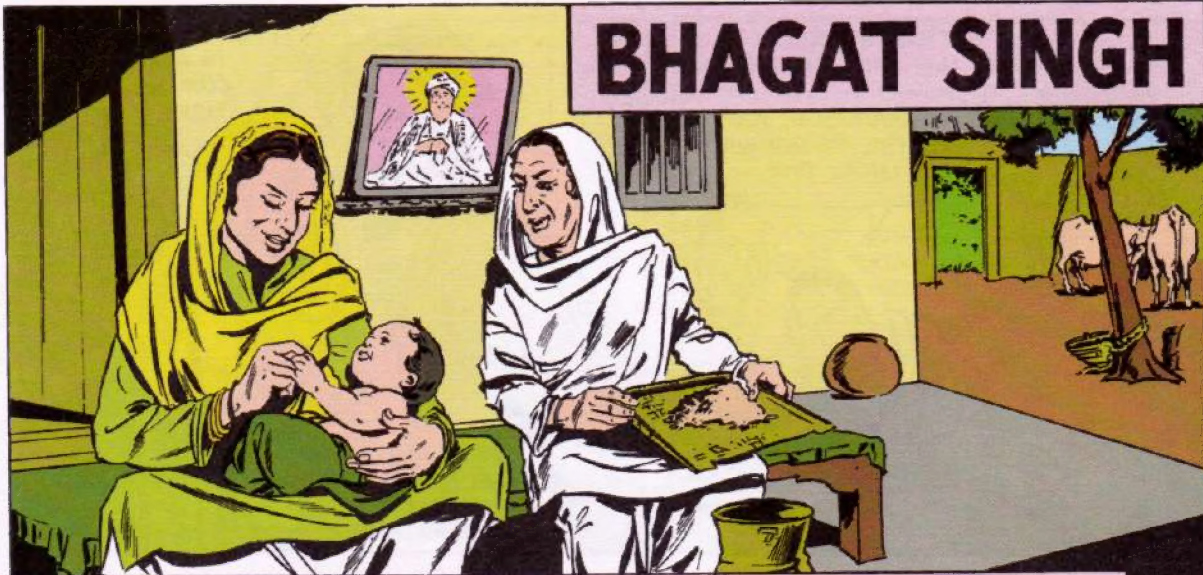
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BHAGAT SINGH



SEPTEMBER 27, 1907: IN THE VILLAGE OF BANGA, NEAR LAHORE, THE BIRTH OF A BABY BROUGHT JOY TO THE OTHERWISE GLOOMY HOUSEHOLD OF SARDAR KISHAN SINGH.

VIDYAVATI LOOKED FONDLY AT HER BABY.

I WISH YOUR FATHER AND UNCLES WERE HERE TODAY.

VIDYAVATI'S HUSBAND, KISHAN SINGH, AND HIS TWO BROTHERS WERE THEN IN JAIL FOR OPPOSING THE BRITISH RULE IN INDIA.

SOON AFTER—

KISHAN!

MOTHER!

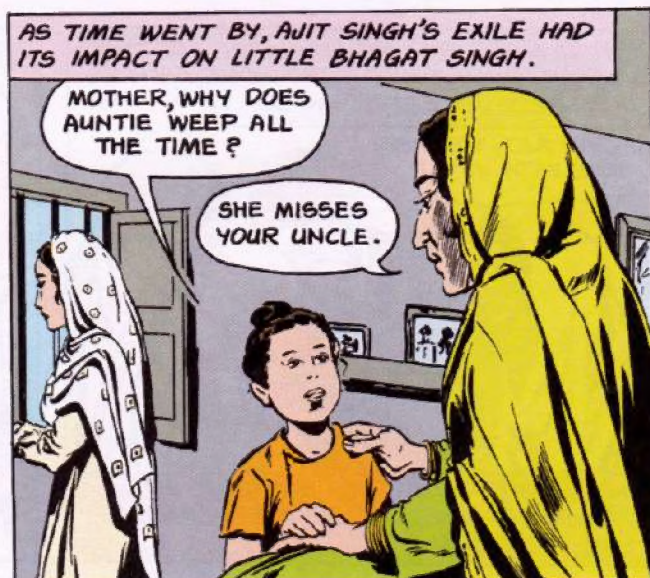
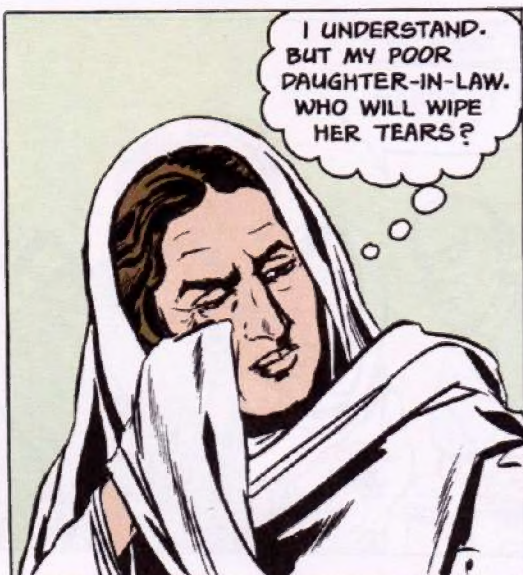
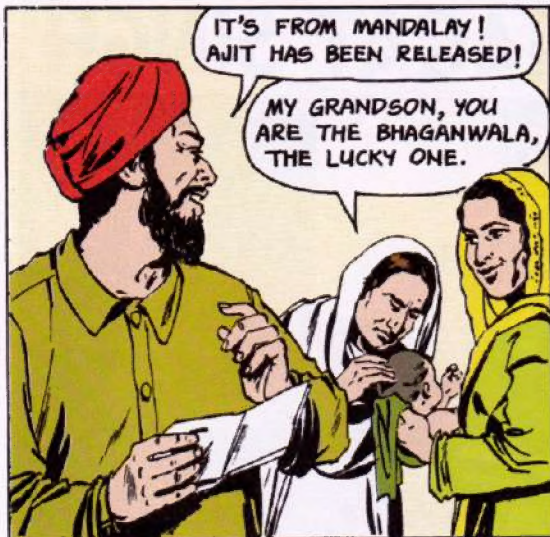
KISHAN SINGH AND HIS YOUNGEST BROTHER, SWARAN SINGH, COULD COME HOME BECAUSE THEY WERE RELEASED ON BAIL.

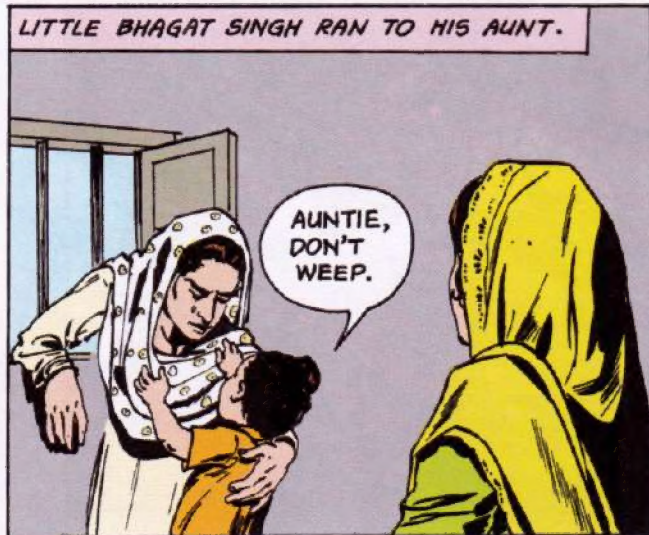
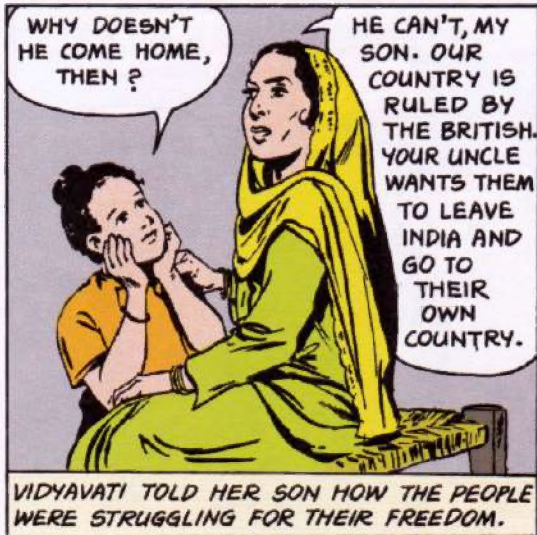
IF ONLY AJIT, TOO, WERE HERE WITH US!

AJIT SINGH, THE SECOND BROTHER, WAS SERVING A SENTENCE IN THE MANDALAY JAIL IN BURMA.

JUST THEN —

A TELEGRAM, SIR.

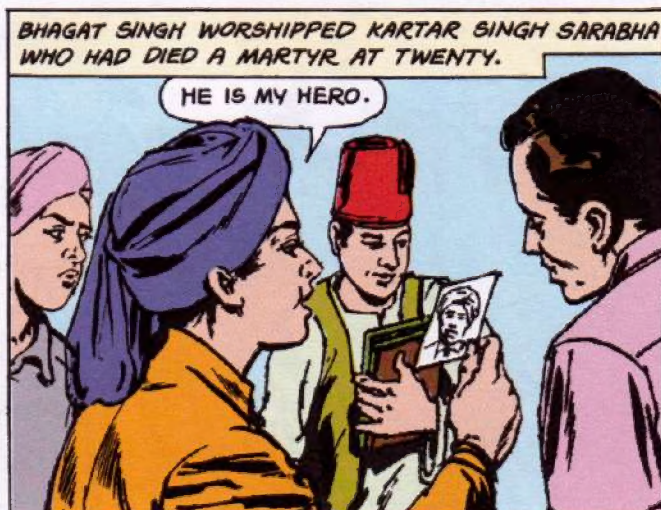
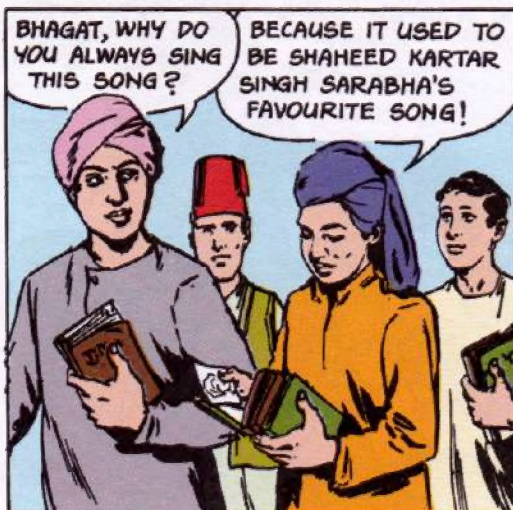






BHAGAT SINGH WAS FIRST SENT TO THE VILLAGE SCHOOL. LATER, IN 1916, HE JOINED THE D.A.V. SCHOOL AT LAHORE. HE WAS LOOKED UPON BY HIS FRIENDS AS A LEADER.

EASY ARE UTTERANCES BUT DIFFICULT IS THE SERVICE OF THE NATION. FOR THE PATH OF PATRIOTISM HAS COUNTLESS TORMENTS.

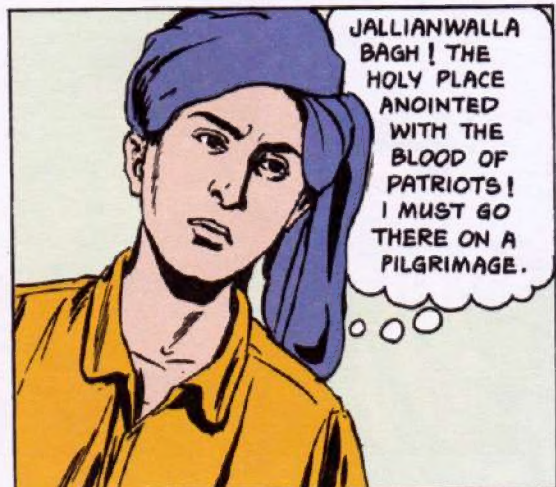
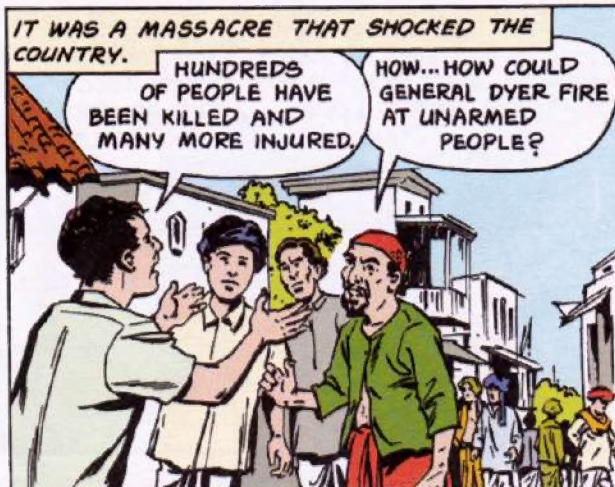
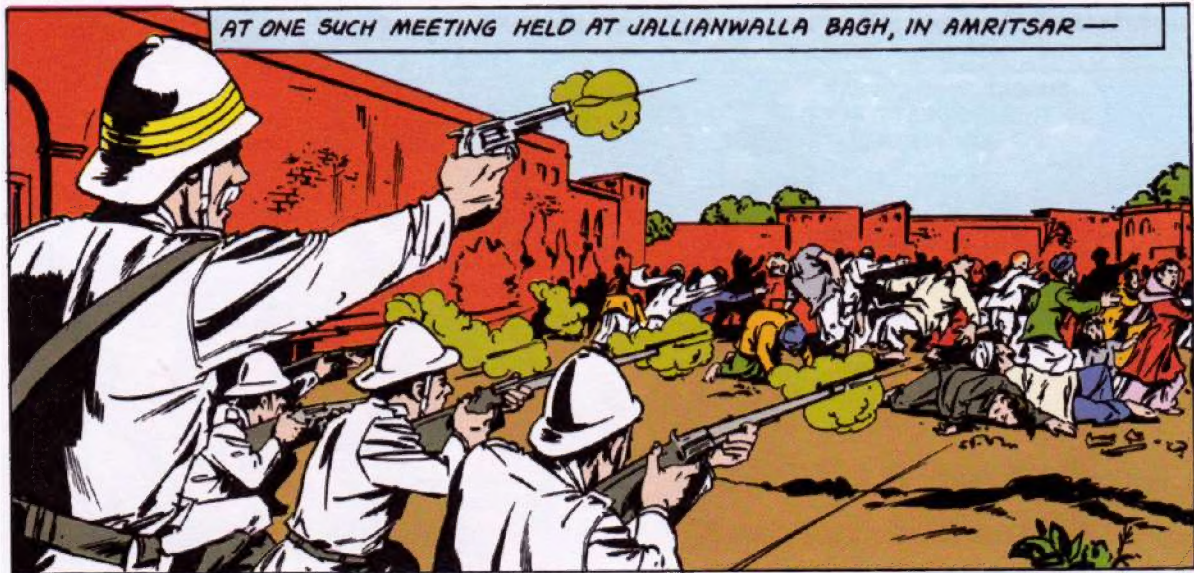


IN 1919, WHEN BHAGAT SINGH WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD, THE GOVERNMENT PASSED THE INFAMOUS ROWLATT ACT.



UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF GANDHIJI, PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY PROTESTED AGAINST THE ROWLATT ACT WITH DEMONSTRATIONS AND MEETINGS.





BHAGAT SINGH COLLECTED SOME OF THE RED EARTH.



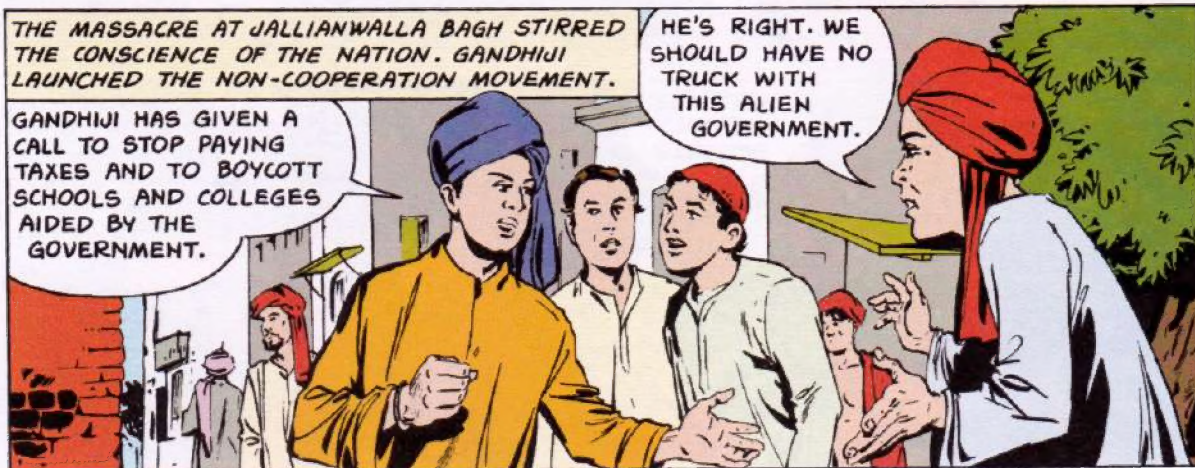
THIS EARTH SHALL INSPIRE ME TO SACRIFICE EVERYTHING FOR THE CAUSE.



THE MASSACRE AT JALLIANWALLA BAGH STIRRED THE CONSCIENCE OF THE NATION. GANDHIJI LAUNCHED THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT.

GANDHIJI HAS GIVEN A CALL TO STOP PAYING TAXES AND TO BOYCOTT SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES AIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

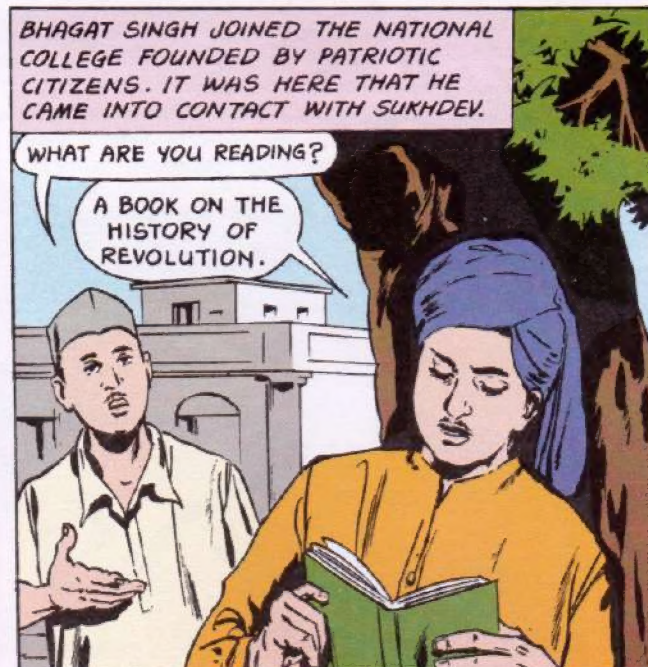
HE'S RIGHT. WE SHOULD HAVE NO TRUCK WITH THIS ALIEN GOVERNMENT.



BHAGAT SINGH JOINED THE NATIONAL COLLEGE FOUNDED BY PATRIOTIC CITIZENS. IT WAS HERE THAT HE CAME INTO CONTACT WITH SUKHDEV.

WHAT ARE YOU READING?

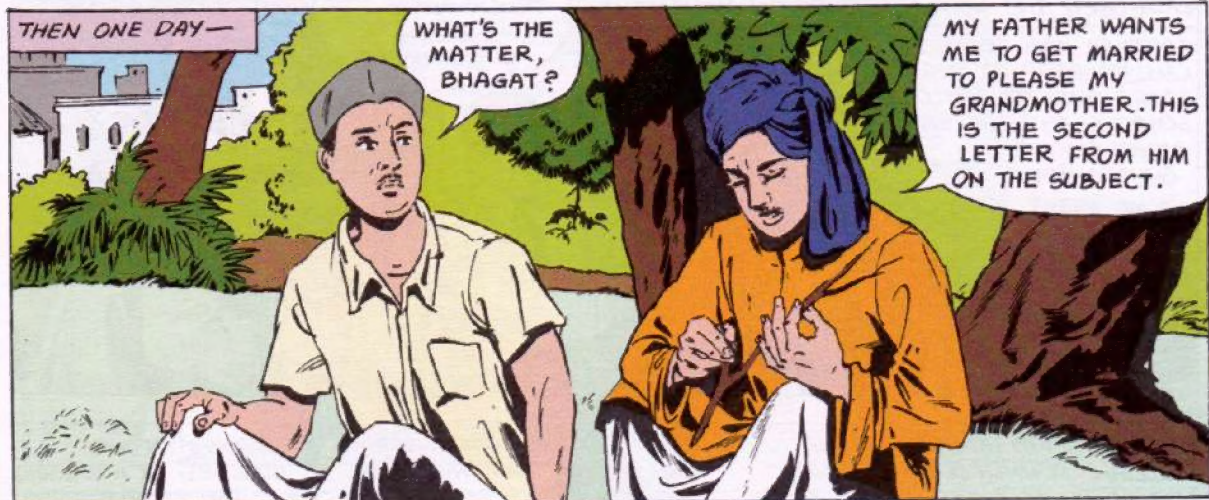
A BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF REVOLUTION.



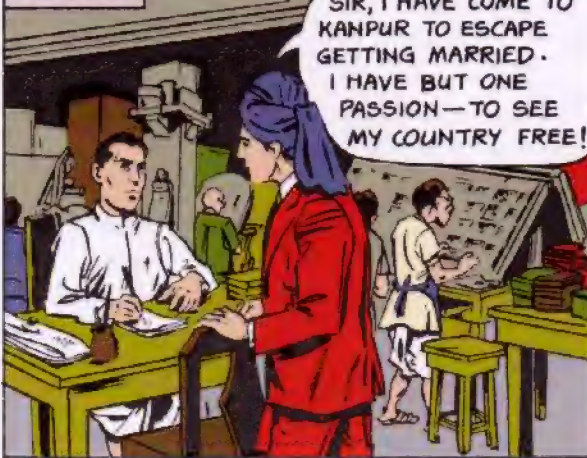
DO YOU THINK WE WILL HAVE A REVOLUTION HERE IN INDIA?

YES. WHEN WE SUCCEED IN AROUSING THE PEOPLE.





BHAGAT SINGH WENT TO KANPUR AND MET GANESH SHANKAR VIDYARTHI, A GREAT PATRIOT.



YOUR PASSION IS LIKE THAT OF THE MOTH FOR THE FLAME. IT COULD PROVE FATAL. I AM NOT UNAWARE OF THAT, SIR.



AND BHAGAT SINGH BEGAN TO WORK FOR VIDYARTHI'S PRATAP PRESS WHICH SPECIALISED IN NATIONALIST LITERATURE.



HE JOINED THE HINDUSTAN REPUBLIC ASSOCIATION.

WE MUST EDUCATE OUR PEOPLE ON THE NEED FOR FREEDOM.

LEAVE THAT TO US, SIR.



BHAGAT SINGH DID NOT WASTE ANY TIME. ONE DUSSERA DAY, HE AND HIS FIVE COMPANIONS ATTENDED A LOCAL FAIR AND BEGAN TO DISTRIBUTE LEAFLETS.



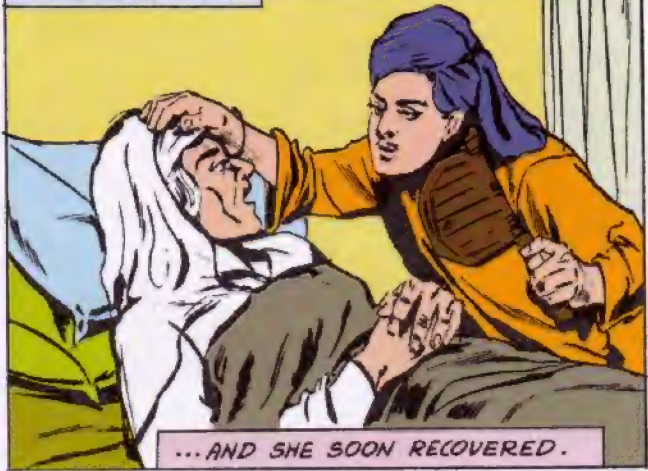




BHAGAT SINGH'S STAY IN KANPUR CAME TO AN ABRUPT END. HE HAD TO LEAVE FOR LAHORE. HIS GRANDMOTHER WAS SERIOUSLY ILL.



BHAGAT SINGH RETURNED TO LAHORE AND NURSED HIS GRANDMOTHER WITH GREAT CARE AND LOVE...



THOSE WERE THE DAYS WHEN THE SIKHS HAD LAUNCHED A PROTEST MOVEMENT AGAINST THE BRITISH FOR DEPOSING RIPUDAMAN SINGH, THE MAHARAJA OF NABHA.

BHAGAT, SOME SIKH JATHAS ON THEIR MARCH TO JAITO WILL BE STOPPING AT OUR VILLAGE. I WANT YOU TO LOOK AFTER THEIR COMFORTS.



AT THE VILLAGE, HOWEVER —

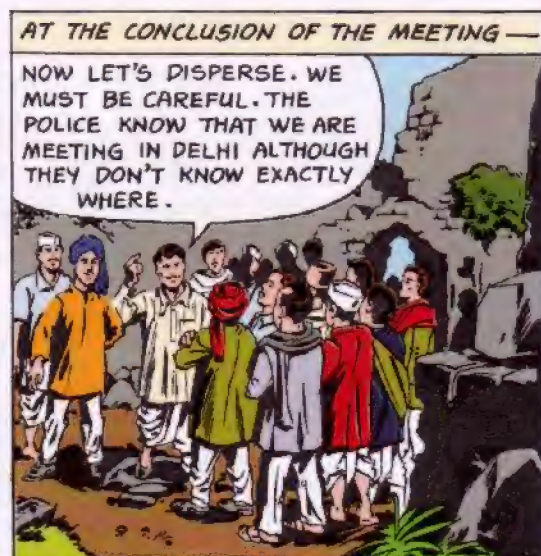
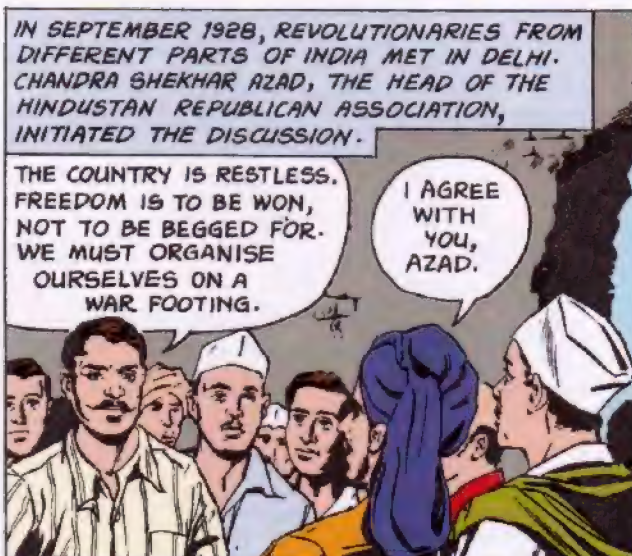
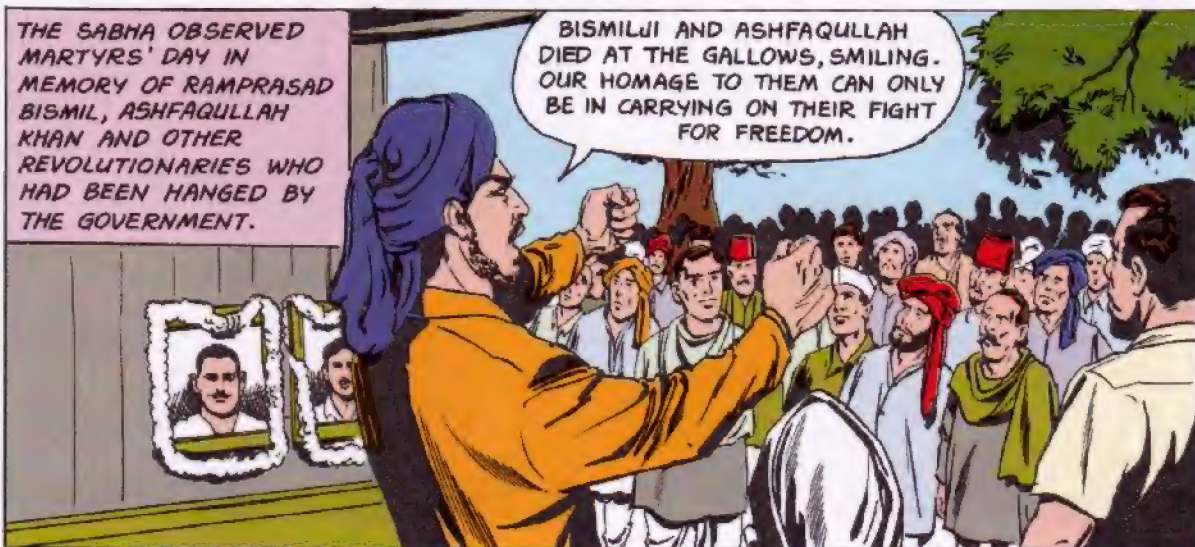
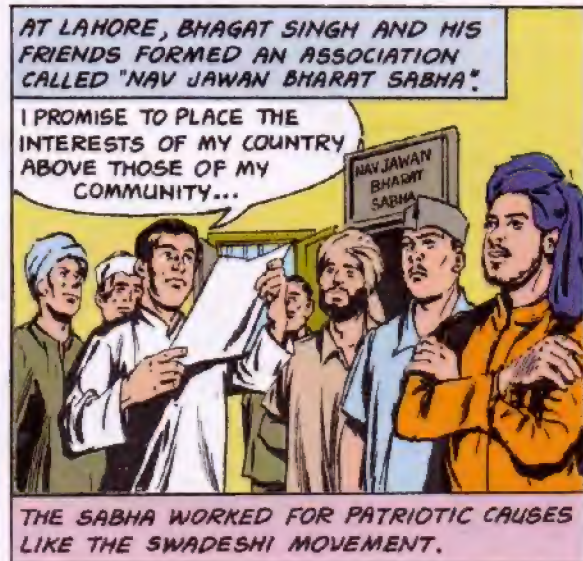
IF WE HONOUR THE SIKH JATHAS, WE WILL BE INVITING THE WRATH OF THE GOVERNMENT.

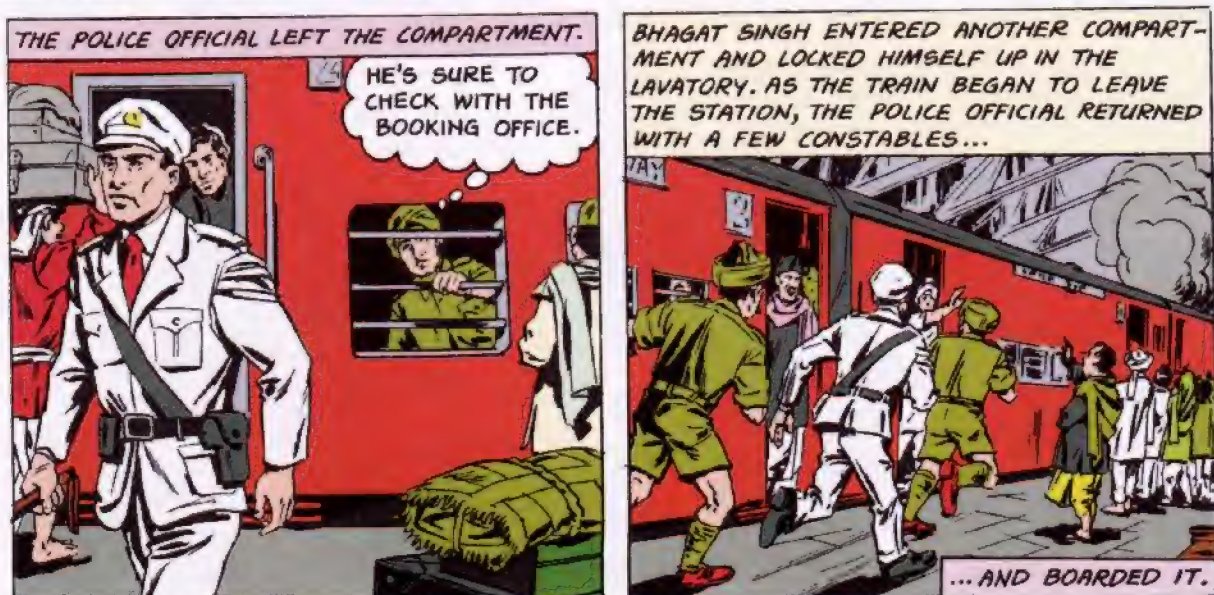
THAT SHOULD NOT DETER US FROM OFFERING OUR HOSPITALITY TO THE GUESTS, UNCLE.

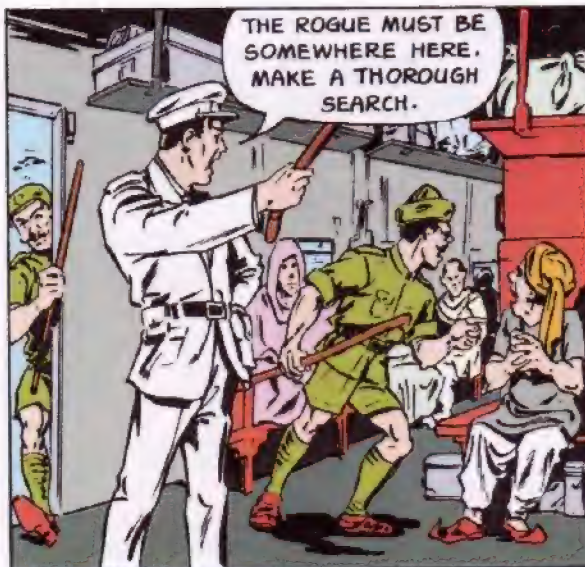


BHAGAT SINGH HAD HIS WAY. LATER —









LITTLE DID THEY REALISE THAT THE MAN THEY WERE LOOKING FOR WAS SEATED RIGHT THERE WITH A COPY OF THE GITA IN HIS HAND .



THE SIMON COMMISSION WAS APPOINTED BY THE BRITISH TO STUDY THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY.



ON OCTOBER 30, 1928, A HUGE PROCESSION WAS TAKEN OUT BY LALA LAJPAT RAI, THE GREAT LEADER FROM THE PUNJAB .

GO BACK! SIMON COMMISSION GO BACK!

INDIA FOR INDIANS.

A POLICE PARTY STOPPED THE PROCESSION NEAR THE RAILWAY STATION.



BUT LALAJI MARCHED AHEAD. THEN THE POLICE RESORTED TO A LATHI CHARGE.



ONE LATHI CAME DOWN ON THE UMBRELLA WHICH LALAJI WAS HOLDING.



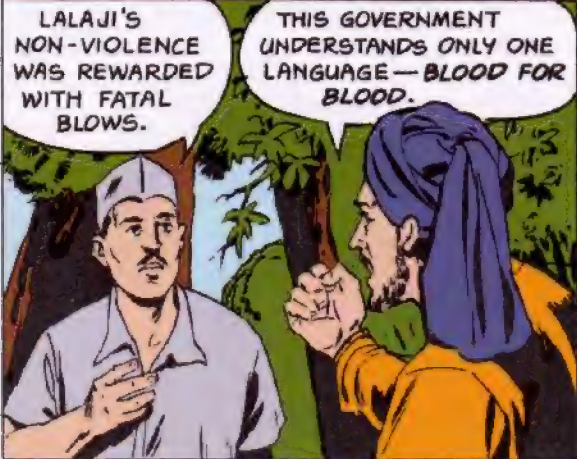
BHAGAT SINGH AND HIS COMRADES THREW A CORDON ROUND LALAJI. YET HE WAS HIT ON HIS SHOULDER AND CHEST.



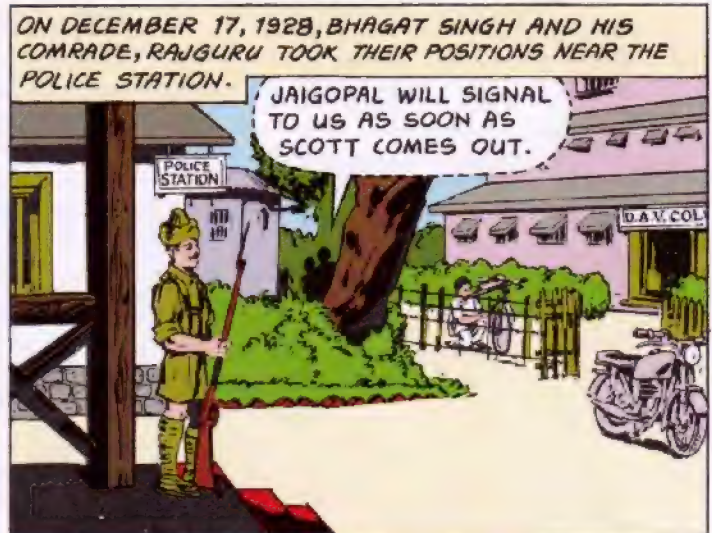
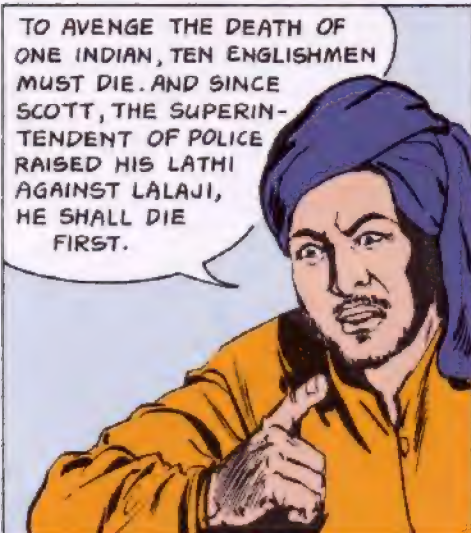
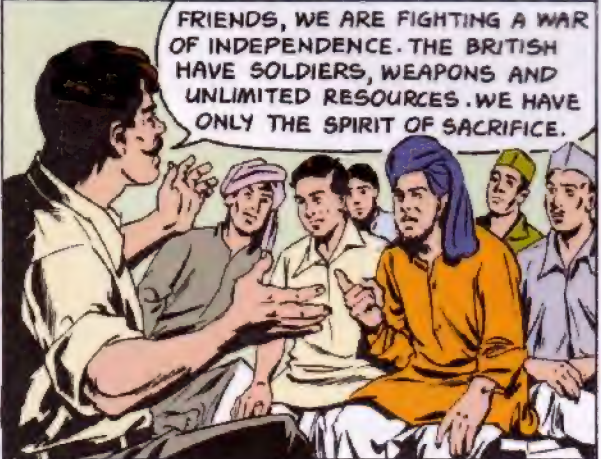
LATER IN THE EVENING —

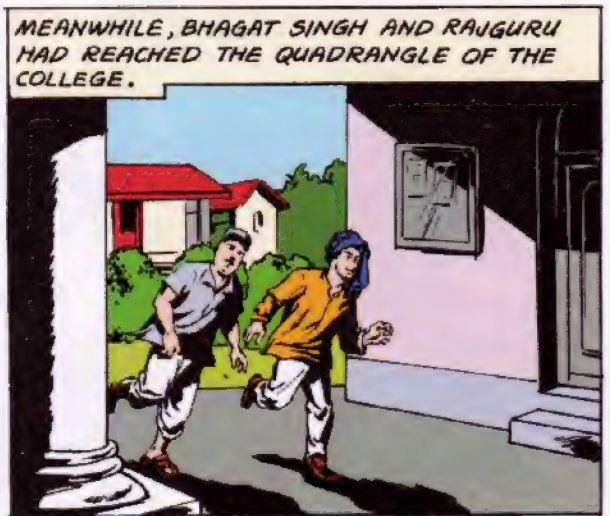
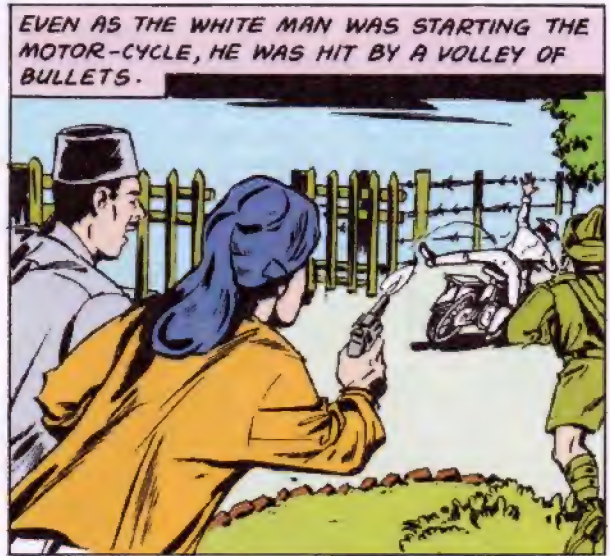


LALAJI NEVER RECOVERED FROM THE BLOWS HE RECEIVED. HE DIED TWO WEEKS LATER.



CHANDRA SHEKHAR AZAD NOW ARRIVED IN LAHORE TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR REVENGE.





THEY WENT UP TO THE
FIRST FLOOR...



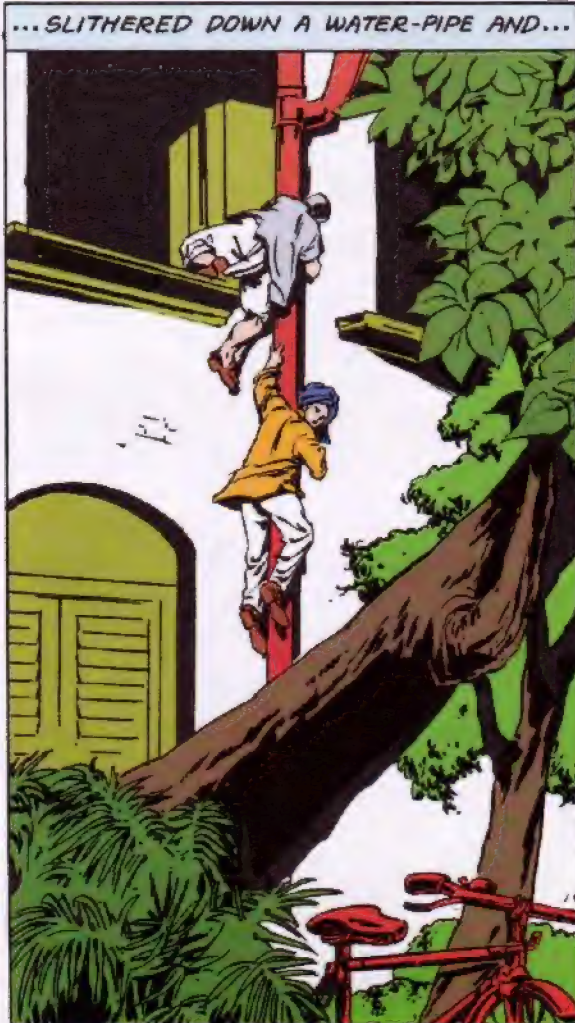
... ENTERED A ROOM...



...SCRAMBLED OUT OF THE
WINDOW...



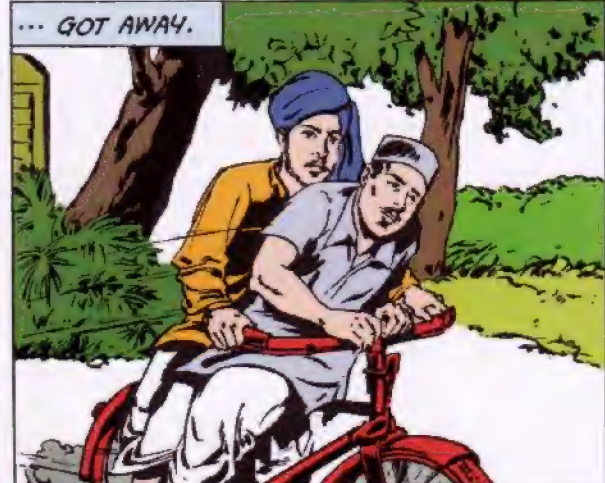
...SLITHERED DOWN A WATER-PIPE AND...



... MOUNTING THE BICYCLE LEFT THERE
FOR THEM...



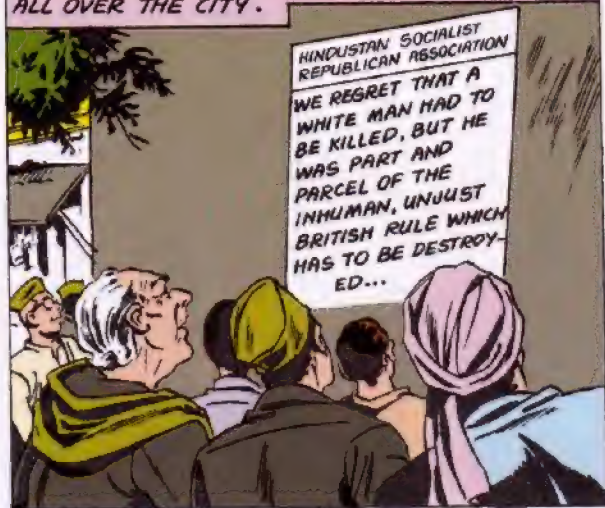
... GOT AWAY.



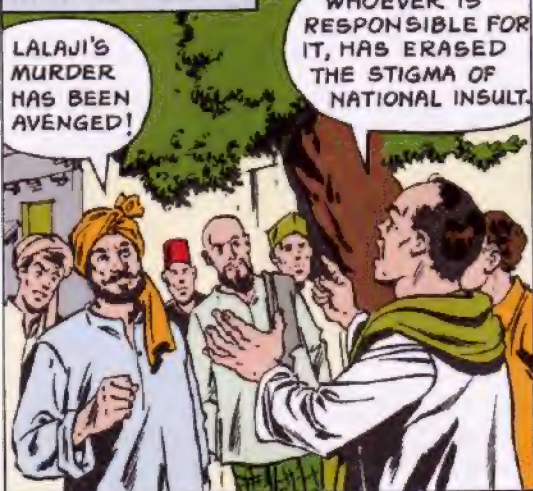
LATER, THEY REALISED THAT THE MAN THEY HAD KILLED WAS SAUNDERS, THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE AND NOT SCOTT.



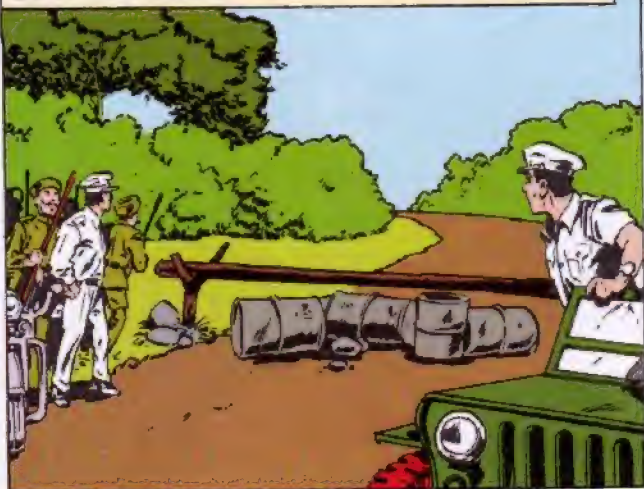
ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, NOTICES APPEARED ALL OVER THE CITY.



THE WHOLE OF THE PUNJAB RESOUNDED WITH THE NEWS.



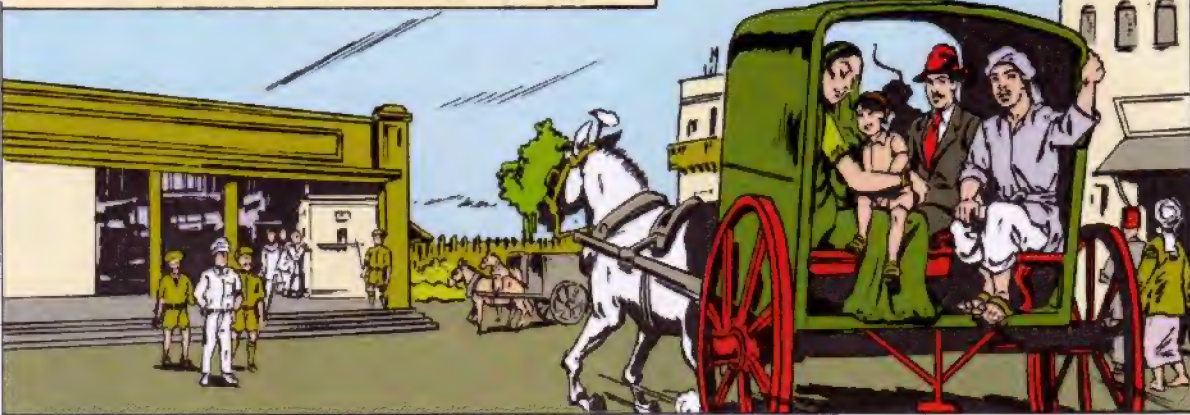
MEANWHILE, POLICE GUARDS KEPT WATCH OVER ALL ROADS LEADING OUT OF LAHORE...



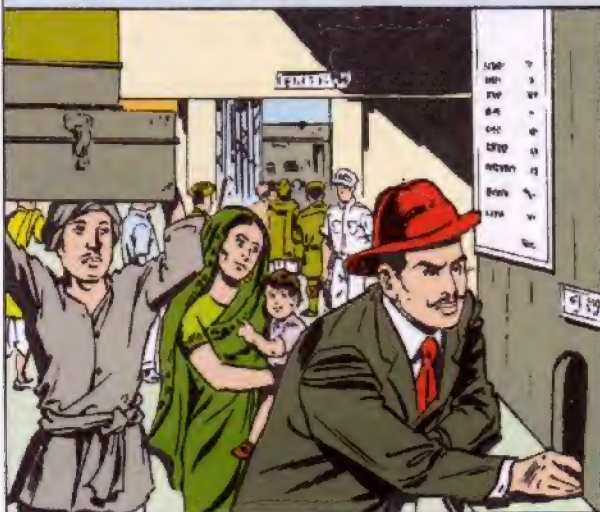
...AS WELL AS AT THE RAILWAY STATION.



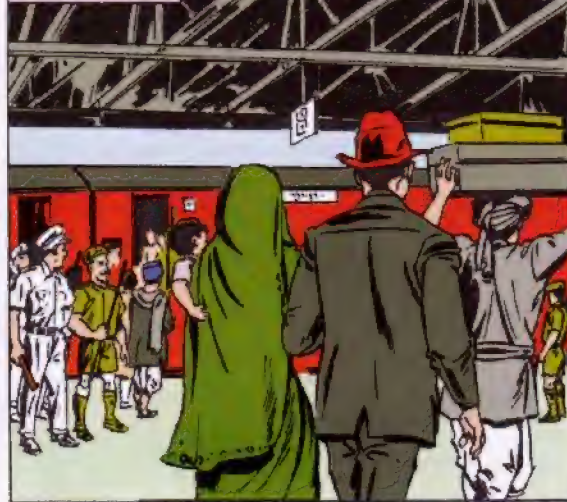
AS THE ATTENTION OF THE POLICE WAS FOCUSED ON THOSE WHO WERE TRAVELLING ALONE, THEY HARDLY NOTICED THE TONGA WHICH BROUGHT A PROSPEROUS LOOKING FAMILY TO THE STATION.



THE ELEGANTLY DRESSED SAHIB WALKED UP TO THE BOOKING OFFICE WINDOW. HIS WIFE AND CHILD AND A SERVANT FOLLOWED.



THE SAHIB BOUGHT THE TICKETS AND THE POLICE LET THE PARTY ENTER THE PLATFORM.



THE SAHIB AND HIS WIFE BOARDED A FIRST CLASS COMPARTMENT, AND THE SERVANT, A THIRD CLASS COMPARTMENT.



THE BIRDS HAD FLOWN! THE SAHIB WAS NONE OTHER THAN BHAGAT SINGH WHO HAD SHAVED OFF HIS BEARD TO AVOID DETECTION; THE WOMAN WHO POSED AS HIS WIFE WAS DURGA BHABHI, THE WIFE OF A REVOLUTIONARY, BHAGWATI CHARAN; AND THE MAN WHO ACCOMPANIED THEM AS THEIR SERVANT WAS RAJGURU!



CHANDRASHEKHAR, AZAD GOT AWAY TO MATHURA, POSING AS A SADHU.

BHAGAT SINGH MEANWHILE HAD TRAVELLED EASTWARDS TO CALCUTTA. THERE HE MET JATIN DAS, A REVOLUTIONARY.



JATIN, TEACH ME HOW TO MAKE BOMBS. WE NEED THEM.

I WILL GLADLY HELP YOU.

LATER, A BOMB MANUFACTURING CENTRE WAS OPENED IN AGRA. AT A MEETING HELD THERE, THE REVOLUTIONARIES DISCUSSED THEIR FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION.



THE GOVERNMENT IS BENT ON GETTING THE TRADE DISPUTE BILL AND THE PUBLIC SAFETY BILL PASSED.

THESE BILLS WERE MEANT TO SUPPRESS THE LABOUR CLASS AND EMPOWERED THE GOVERNMENT TO JAIL ANYONE WITHOUT GIVING A REASON.



THE BRITISH WANT TO CRUSH US...THE EYES OF BRITISH AND INDIAN MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY WILL HAVE TO BE OPENED.

BUT HOW?

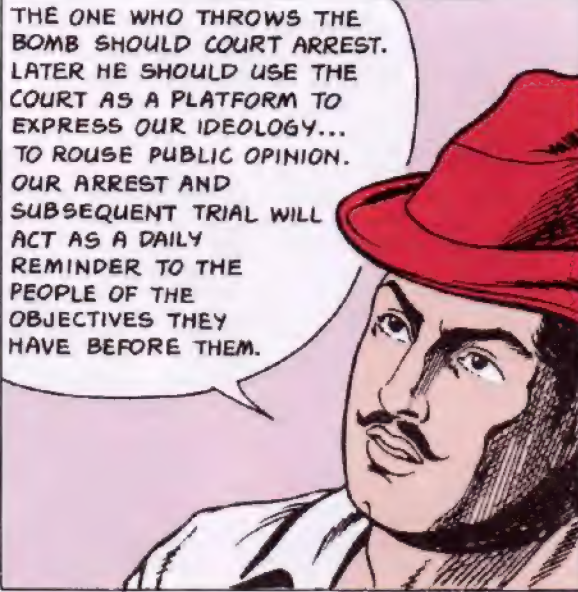
THE DAY THE BILL IS INTRODUCED, BOMBS SHOULD BE THROWN. WE WILL MAKE A NOISE LOUD ENOUGH TO BE HEARD BY THE DEAF.



A GOOD IDEA! BUT MAKE SURE THAT THE BOMB HURTS NOBODY. WE MUST MAKE PLANS TO ENTER THE ASSEMBLY, THROW THE BOMB AND ESCAPE...

NO!

THE ONE WHO THROWS THE BOMB SHOULD COURT ARREST. LATER HE SHOULD USE THE COURT AS A PLATFORM TO EXPRESS OUR IDEOLOGY... TO ROUSE PUBLIC OPINION. OUR ARREST AND SUBSEQUENT TRIAL WILL ACT AS A DAILY REMINDER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE OBJECTIVES THEY HAVE BEFORE THEM.



SO ON APRIL 8, 1929 WHEN THE CENTRAL ASSEMBLY MET TO DISCUSS THE BILLS, BHAGAT SINGH AND HIS COMPANION, BATUKESHWAR DUTT, STOOD UP IN THE VISITORS' GALLERY.



THE BOMB WAS THROWN. IT HURT NOBODY. SOME LEAFLETS TOO WERE THROWN.

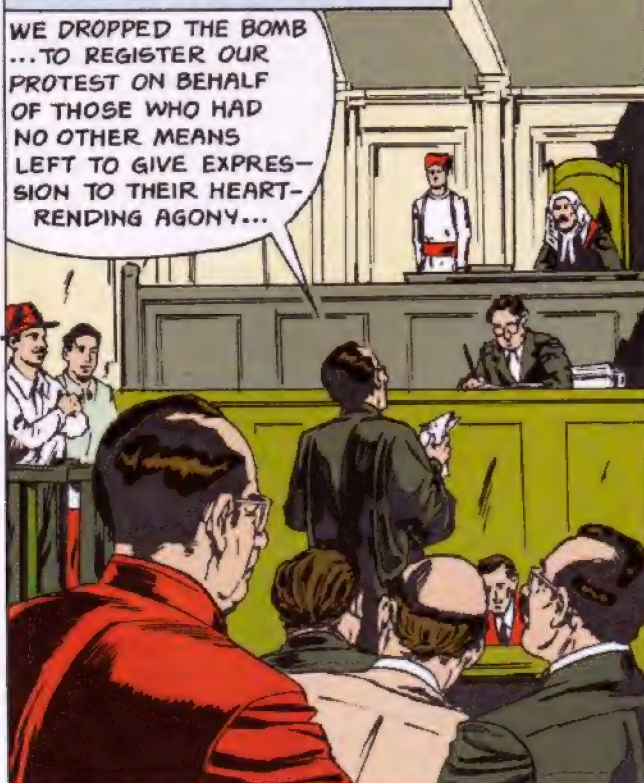
THE TWO REVOLUTIONARIES CONTINUED TO SHOUT SLOGANS TILL THE POLICE CAME FOR THEM. THEY DID NOT RESIST ARREST.



BHAGAT SINGH AND DUTT WERE TAKEN TO THE POLICE STATION. ON THE WAY THEY PASSED THE TONGA CARRYING DURGA BHABHI, HER HUSBAND AND THEIR LITTLE SON.



LATER IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT, ASAF ALI, THE LAWYER, READ OUT THE STATEMENT PREPARED BY BHAGAT SINGH.



THE TWO REVOLUTIONARIES WERE SENTENCED TO TRANSPORTATION FOR LIFE. THEY FILED AN APPEAL IN THE HIGH COURT.

GENERAL DYER KILLED HUNDREDS OF PERSONS IN JALLIANWALLA BAGH. HE WAS GIVEN LAKHS OF RUPEES AS A REWARD BY HIS COUNTRYMEN.



IN CONTRAST, WE THROW A WEAK BOMB ENSURING THAT NO ONE IS HURT. WE ARE TRIED AND GIVEN A LIFE SENTENCE.



OUR MOTIVE WAS NOT TO KILL, BUT TO MAKE OUR IDEALS HEARD AND ACCEPTED.



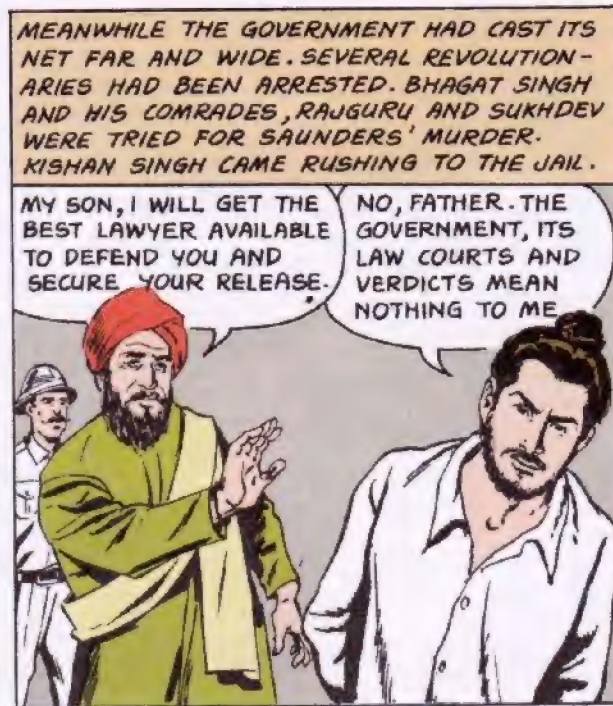
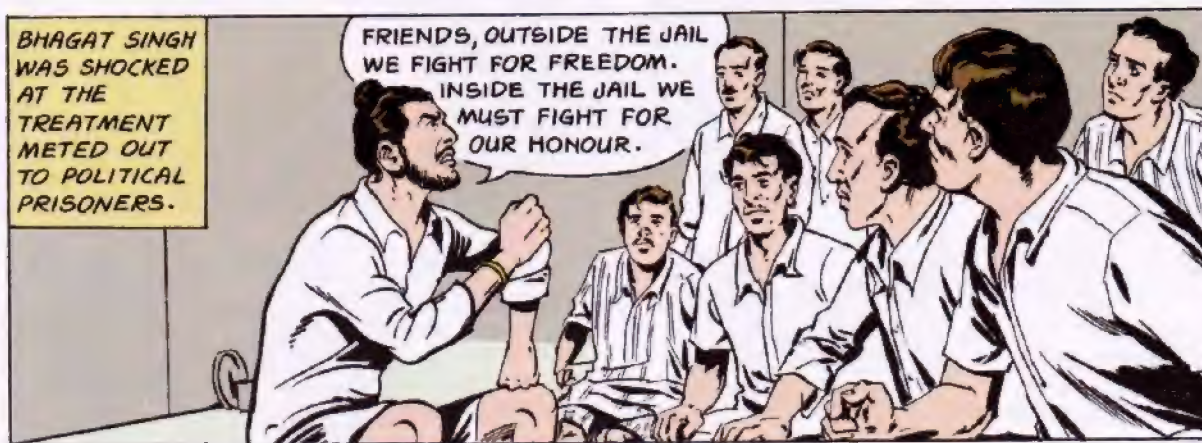
AS EXPECTED, THE HIGH COURT UPHELD THE JUDGEMENT OF THE SESSIONS COURT.

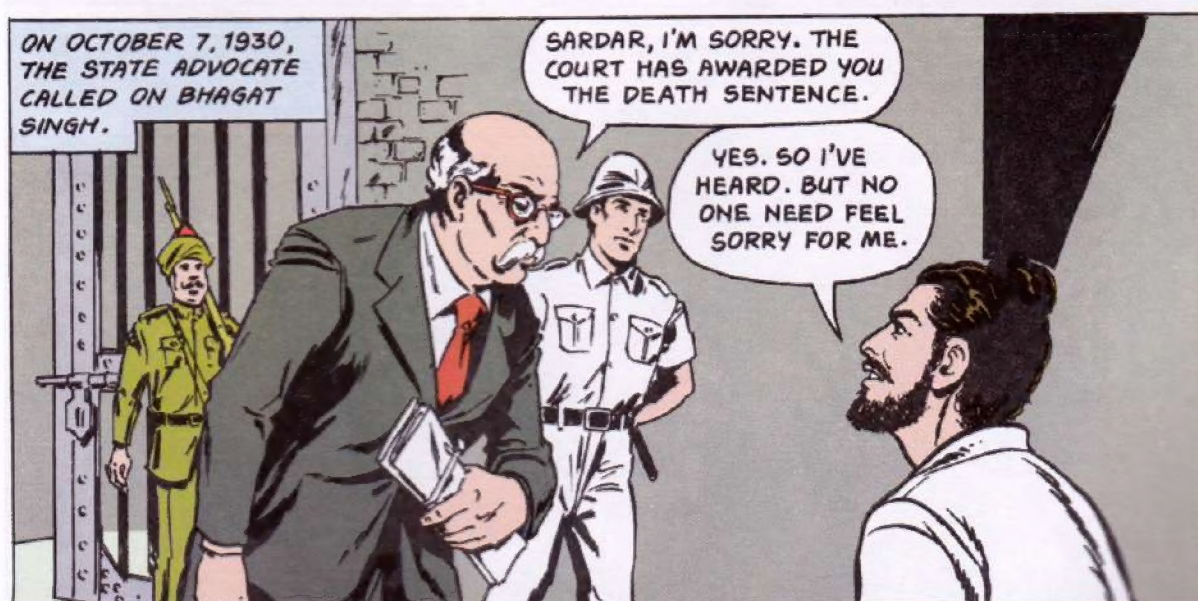
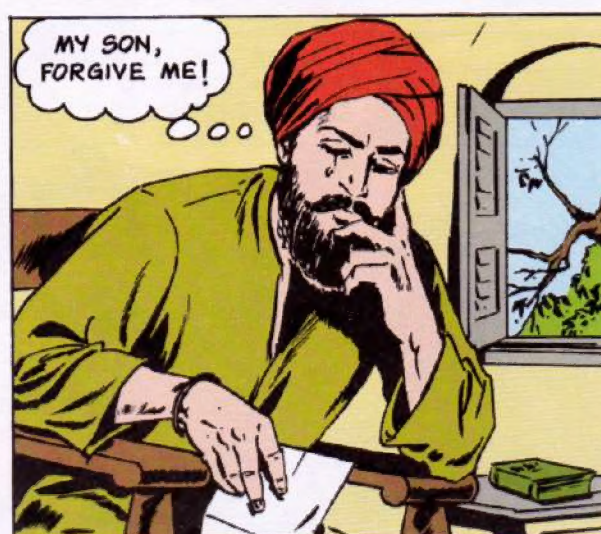
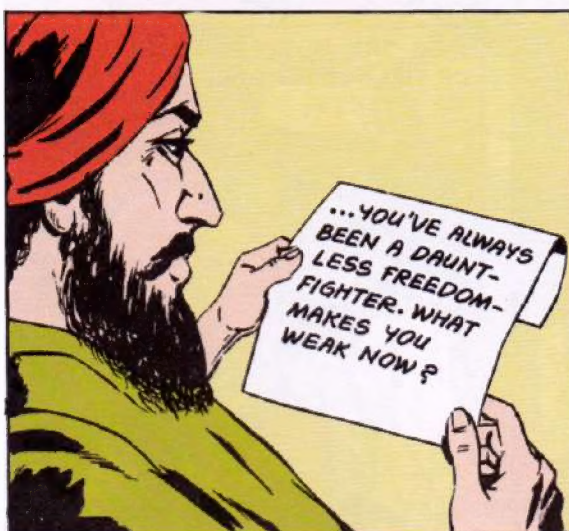
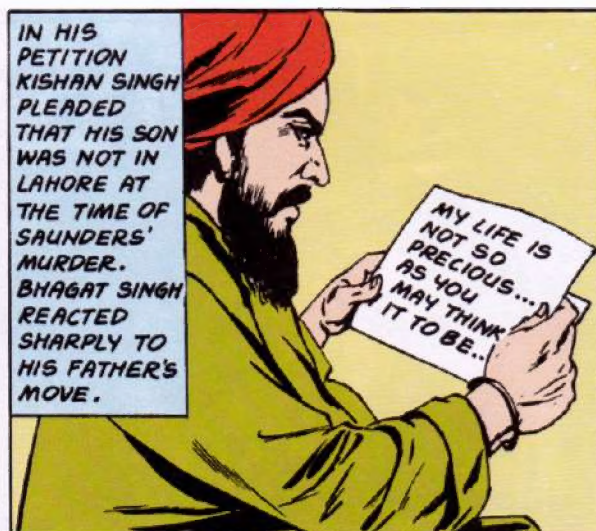
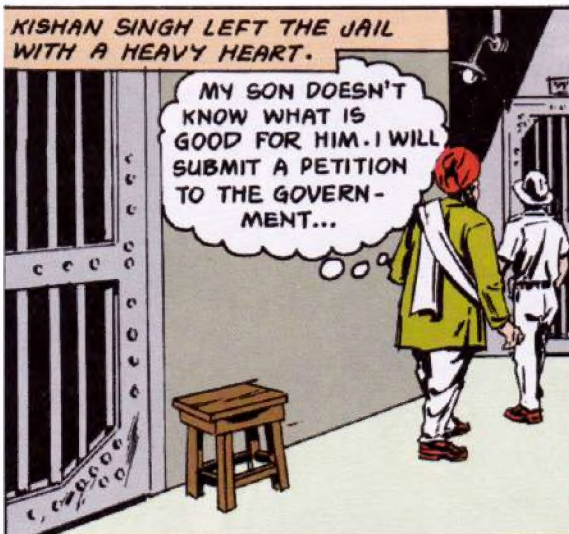
LATER BHAGAT SINGH WAS SHIFTED TO THE LAHORE CENTRAL JAIL.

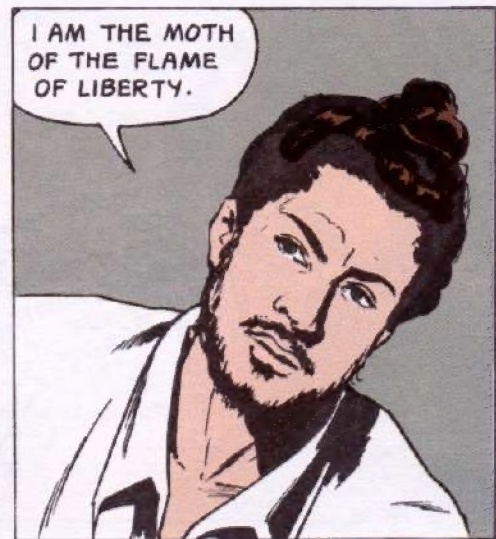
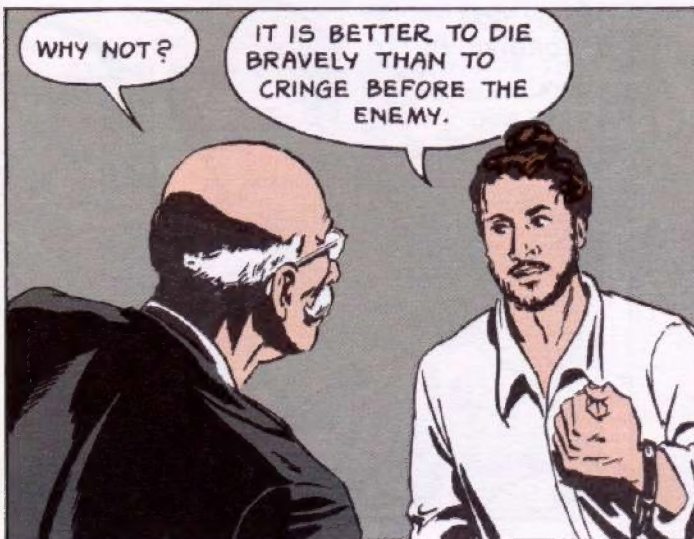
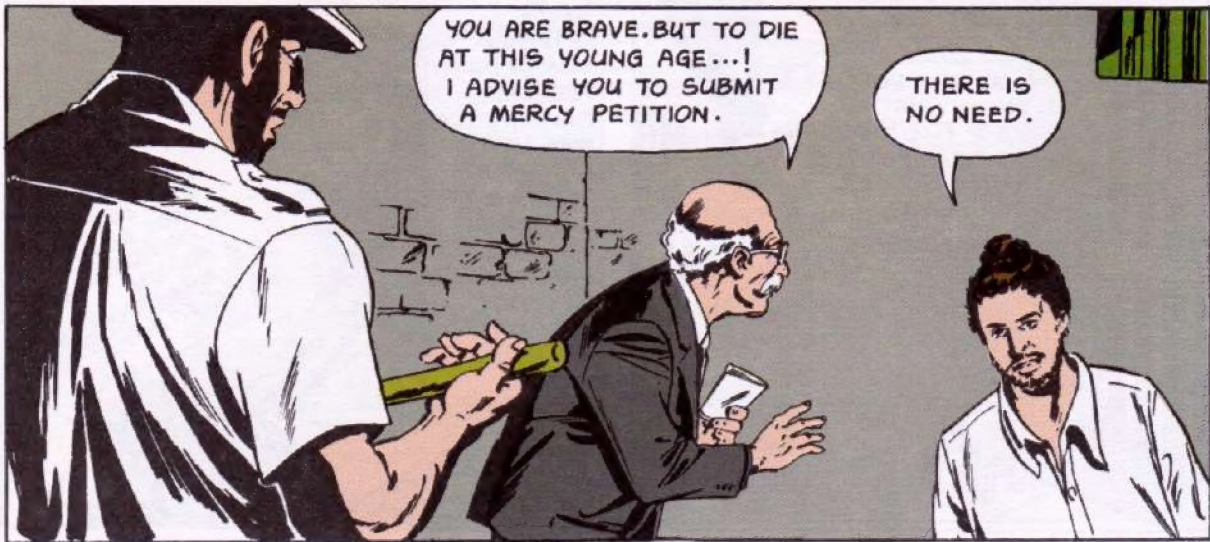
I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOME BOOKS...

BOOKS? DO YOU THINK THIS IS A LIBRARY?

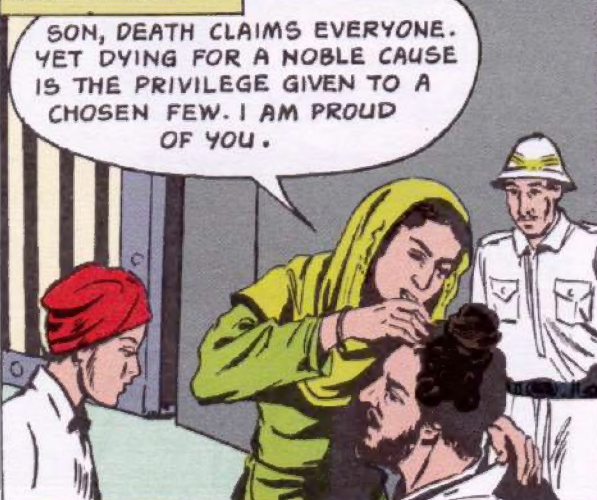








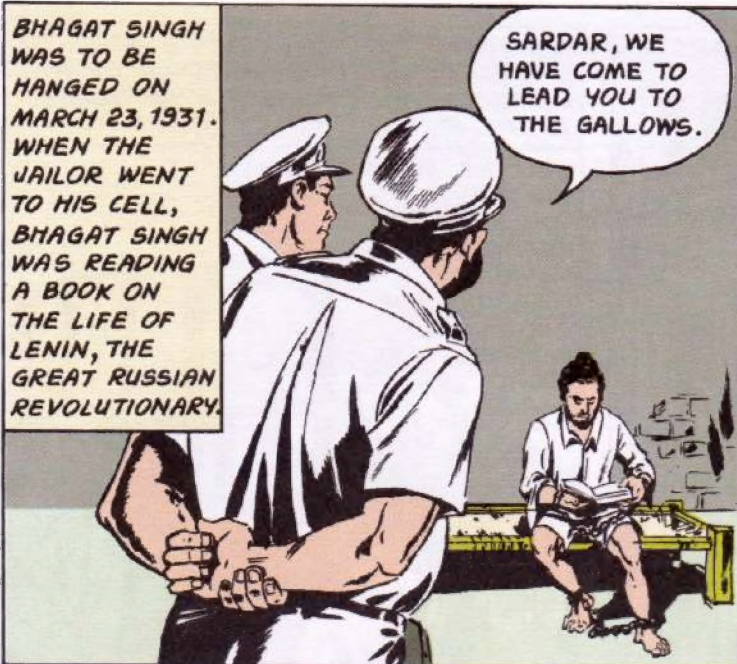
BHAGAT SINGH'S MOTHER, VIDYAVATI, WAS EQUALLY BRAVE. WHEN SHE MET HER SON IN JAIL —



BUT HIS YOUNGEST BROTHER, KULTAR SINGH, COULD NOT WITHHOLD HIS TEARS. LATER, BHAGAT SINGH WROTE HIM A LETTER.



BHAGAT SINGH WAS TO BE HANGED ON MARCH 23, 1931. WHEN THE JAILOR WENT TO HIS CELL, BHAGAT SINGH WAS READING A BOOK ON THE LIFE OF LENIN, THE GREAT RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY.

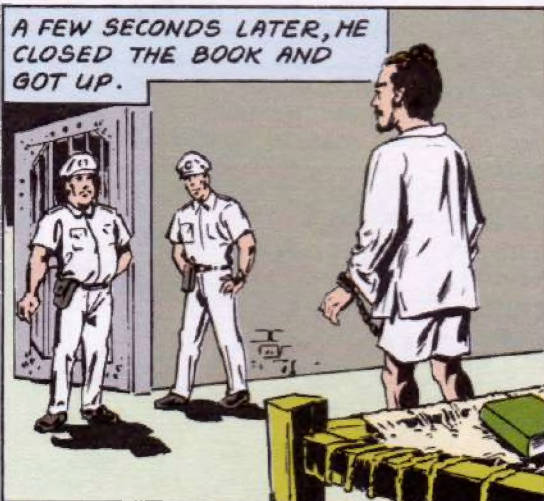


SARDAR, WE HAVE COME TO LEAD YOU TO THE GALLOWS.

JUST A MOMENT PLEASE. LET ONE REVOLUTIONARY MEET ANOTHER.



A FEW SECONDS LATER, HE CLOSED THE BOOK AND GOT UP.



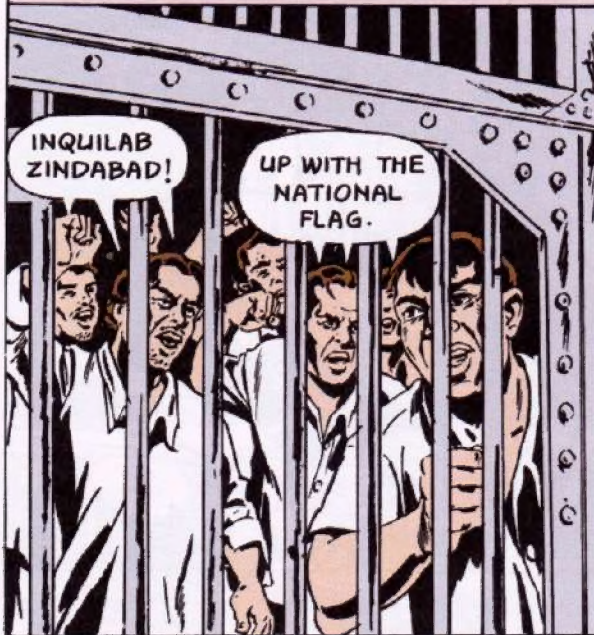
SUKHDEV AND RAJGURU WERE BROUGHT FROM THEIR CELLS. AT 7:00 P.M. THE LAST JOURNEY BEGAN. BHAGAT SINGH BURST INTO SONG.



YOU WILL KILL US BUT NOT THE PATRIOTISM IN US. THE FRAGRANCE OF FREEDOM SHALL RISE FROM OUR PYRES.



HEARING THE SONG, OTHER PRISONERS IN THE JAIL RAISED PATRIOTIC CRIES.



THE THREE REVOLUTIONARIES MARCHED UP TO THE GALLOWS, WATCHED BY THE OFFICIALS. THEN BHAGAT SINGH TURNED TO THE BRITISH DEPUTY COMMISSIONER.

WELL, MR. MAGISTRATE, YOU ARE LUCKY. TODAY YOU SHALL SEE HOW INDIANS EMBRACE DEATH WITH PLEASURE FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR SUPREME IDEAL.



THEN THE LAHORE JAIL RE-SOUNDED WITH A POWERFUL CRY—

INQILAB ZINDABAD!



THE VOICE WAS STILLED FOR A MOMENT WHEN THE HANGMAN PULLED THE ROPE. BUT THE CRY WAS TAKEN UP BY MILLIONS OF INDIANS.



"THE LESSON WHICH WE SHOULD LEARN FROM BHAGAT SINGH IS TO DIE IN A MANLY AND BOLD MANNER SO THAT INDIA MIGHT LIVE," WROTE JAWAHARLAL NEHRU OF THIS VALIANT YOUNG MARTYR.

